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stowing this benefit we are primarily insuring self-profit, and that, therefore, no obligation is imposed. To patronize art is an honor—to neglect it, a disgrace.

BEAUTY IN SERVICEABILITY

It sometimes happens that a word is either so much used or ill-used that it ceases to convey its original meaning and becomes, as it were, a menace through perversion. Such, in a measure, has been the unhappy fate of that excellent and almost indispensable word beautiful, since ambition prompted it to leave the ranks of adjectives and aspire to distinction as a noun. In an impromptu speech at the recent convention of the American Institute of Architects the retiring president, Mr. Cass Gilbert, called attention to the erroneous impression created in the public mind by the exploitation of the "City Beautiful," urging that hereafter emphasis be placed upon the city useful—the city livable—not, one may be sure, with any intention of minimizing the value of beauty but rather of placing the consideration of city planning on a commonsense footing. For beauty after all is distinctly associated with fitness, with serviceability, and the sooner it is so understood the sooner will it find acceptance. City planning has to do with something more than aspect—the lives of the citizens. It comprehends housing conditions, traffic regulations, sanitation. A city built without regard for the comfort and convenience of those who dwell within its boundaries could scarcely be declared to have genuine beauty. A fine park, one good street, a handsome fountain or monument, cannot, as some apparently suppose, be made to cover a multitude of sins in the form of tenement districts, refuse heaps, bad water supply and congested traffic. Yet it is quite possible to satisfy a municipal pride with a veneer, to look only on the outside, to confuse hysteria with enthusiasm, and for these reasons the warning as regards the misinterpretation of the "City Beautiful" was not only timely, but worth repeating. It must be understood that the most beautiful cities are those that are best planned.

NOTES

A. I. A. The Forty-Third Con-
CONVENTION, vention of the American
WASHINGTON, Institute of Architects
D. C. held at Washington,
D. C., December 14th,

15th, and 16th was marked, as usual, by a dignity in procedure indicative both of broadmindedness and high purpose. Very properly, the greater part of the sessions was devoted to the transaction of business and the discussion of matters of such vital moment to the architectural profession as contracts, competitions, schedule of charges and codes, but other topics of general interest were also brought up for consideration, such, for example, as Government art and the relation of the railways to national and municipal development. In his opening address, Mr. Cass Gilbert, the retiring president, reminded the delegates that while it was right to devote much time to those matters which relate to architecture as a profession, they must not neglect its development as an art, declaring that scholarship, intellectual achievement, scientific research, and, above all, the art of designing, are and always would be of the utmost importance to the Institute. Recommending that the Institute take such action, through its committees or otherwise, as might be deemed most effective in seeking the favorable action of Congress and of the Executive to the end that a permanent Bureau or Council of the Fine Arts shall be established by the National Government, Mr. Gilbert said:

"It has been urged that the Institute should advocate, in place of the Bureau or Council of the Fine Arts, a Department of Public Works, under which would be placed the construction, adornment, and maintenance of all public buildings, bridges, parks, and roadways. Such a department, co-ordinating the functions of both structural and artistic design, would seem to be justified by the vast extent of the Government's enterprises. But the exact method by which the general result should be obtained is of comparatively minor importance." And later on, referring to other objects to be advocated